



Howard County Government News Release

Office of Public Information
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland, 21043

410-313-2022 / FAX 410-313-3390 / www.howardcountymd.gov

Mark Miller, Administrator
msmiller@howardcountymd.gov

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Media Contacts:

Mark Miller, Administrator, Office of Public Information, 410-313-2022

Ofelia Ross Ott, Office on Aging, 410-313-6052

County Executive Ulman Asks Residents to Take a Stand and Report Signs of Elder Abuse

National Elder Abuse Awareness Day is June 15; conference for first responders, social workers, health care professionals and others scheduled for June 17

ELLICOTT CITY, MD – June 15 is National Elder Abuse Awareness Day, and Howard County's Department of Citizen Services and Police Department have teamed up to educate the public about the warning signs and what to do if you suspect a person you know is a victim of elder abuse.

Elder abuse refers to the intentional or neglectful acts of a caregiver or 'trusted' individual that may lead to physical, mental or financial abuse or exploitation. It can occur at home, in a nursing home or another institution that provides services or care – it can even happen over the phone.

"If you suspect abuse, ask questions, speak up or call 9-1-1 to report it – don't just assume someone else will take care of it," said Howard County Executive Ken Ulman. "We need to come together as a community to address this problem."

Elder Abuse Awareness Day seeks to educate the public about the signs of abuse or neglect, including: lack of basic hygiene, adequate food or clean and appropriate clothing; lack of critical medical aides like glasses, medications, walker, dentures and hearing aids; person confined to bed or with dementia left without care; a home that is unsanitary, unhealthy, in disrepair and without adequate facilities like heating or cooling, functional plumbing and electricity; changes in behavior; and unexplained fractures, bruises, cuts, sores or burns.

To help first responders, social workers, health care professionals and others identify and investigate abuse, neglect and exploitation, the Department of Citizen Services' Office on Aging, the Howard County Mental Health Authority and the Police Department will co-sponsor a Protecting Vulnerable Adults: 2014 Elder Abuse Awareness Conference. The conference will take place on Tuesday, June 17 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the James Robey Public Safety

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Training Center, 2200 Scott Wheeler Dr. in Marriottsville. Attendees will gain an understanding of the dynamics and impact of physical, mental, financial and other forms of abuse on older adult victims, and will learn how to partner with other agencies to better protect and advocate for the vulnerable adult. The conference is free, but registration is required. For more information, contact Ofelia Ross Ott with the Office on Aging at 410-313-6052 or e-mail oross@howardcountymd.gov.

Elder abuse can also be financial in nature, with vulnerable elder adults asked to pay excessive amounts for care; a caregiver controlling the elder's money but failing to provide for critical needs; or the elder asked to sign property transfers or other legal papers without being able to understand what the transaction actually means.

The Department of Citizen Services' Office of Consumer Affairs reports that County seniors are frequently targeted by sweepstakes scams, door-to-door home improvement scams and con artists who falsely claim they owe back taxes to the IRS. Residents are urged to contact the Office of Consumer Affairs, about suspicious phone calls, e-mail or home visits at 410-313-6420 or by e-mail at consumer@howardcountymd.gov.

To learn more about elder abuse and how to prevent it, visit the National Center for Elder Abuse website at www.ncea.aoa.gov or the Office on Aging's website, www.howardcountyaging.org/eldersafety. For assistance, contact the Howard County Office on Aging at 410-313-5980 (voice/relay). If you feel an older person is in a life threatening situation or immediate danger, call 9-1-1.

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